

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

letter to Bucmaccorso di Lapo Giovanni. According to this, the Signoria and the Eight had assured her that they were repentant for having gone against the Church, and ready to throw themselves on the Pope's mercy. " See, my lords," she said, " if you really intend to use all humility in deed as well as word, and that I should offer you up before your father like sons that were dead, I will labour in this to the utmost of your wish. In no other wise would I go." They declared emphatically that this was their intention, and that they would instruct the ambassadors, whom they were going to send after her, to confer with her about everything. " We do not believe," said one of those present, apparently Buonaccorso himself, "that this peace can ever be brought about, save by the hands of the servants of God."¹ Upon this understanding, in the latter part of May, Catherine accepted the mission. " It seems to me," she wrote to the Pope, "that the Divine Goodness is making the great wolves become lambs. I am now coming to you at once, to lay them humbled in your lap. I am certain that you will receive them like a father, notwithstanding the way they have injured and persecuted you ; learning from the sweet first Truth who says that the Good Shepherd, when He has found the sheep that was lost, takes it upon His shoulders and brings it back to the fold. So will you do, father ; now that your lost sheep is found again, you will take it on the shoulder of love, and put it into the sheepfold of Holy Church. Then, at once, our sweet Saviour wills and commands you to raise the banner of the most holy Cross against the infidels, and that the whole war should be turned against them. Keep back the soldiers whom you have hired to come hither, and do not suffer them to come ; for they would ruin everything, rather than put it straight. My sweet father, you ask me about your coming; and I answer and tell you, in the name of Christ crucified, that you must come as soon as you can. If you can do so, come before September; and, if you cannot come before, do not delay longer than until September

I Letter 234 (215). Cf. below, p. 191,